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Do You Believe in Miracles?

Eager eyes peered up at me from behind horn-rimmed glasses and a nostalgic feeling of youthful vibrancy clung to my cashmere sweater. My duties at the so-called “writing conference” I was attending were forgotten for just a moment as I reminisced in my own days as an up and coming journalist. I clasped my hands together and smiled at my pupils, their ballpoint pens in hand and their neurons buzzing as they awaited the words to spill out of my mouth like little kids anticipate the tingling of sugar on their tongues when they see candy. “You are all here today because you want the secret, the trick that writers like me use to develop a truly remarkable story,” I began. Already, kids were scribbling on their notepads and I stifled a chuckle as I admired their overzealous desire to learn. “Well, let me tell you that stories cannot be forced, they are not improvised, and they are in fact a means of relaying real life events that impact our world. The question is, how do we put ourselves in the position to write a great story? How do we recognize the foundation for a potential story and then decide whether or not to pursue it? I could sit here and talk to you about the process; the importance of getting all the nitty gritty details and the knack that writers must have for knowing what the public craves. But you already know all of this. Instead, I’m going to tell you my story; the journey that I embarked on in the summer of 1979 when I unknowingly committed myself to capturing one of the most beautiful moments in American history.”

It was a hot, steamy day in the middle of July. I was waiting in a long line of cars at the Chevron station, for the oil crisis had caused the demand for gasoline that summer to far exceed the supply. I remember dripping with sweat from the heat and stressing about work because my boss had declared that my stories were too predictable. “Embellish! Take risks! Make a name for yourself!” he had shouted into my cubicle that morning at work. As images of my boss’ crinkled brow and bellowing voice haunted my mind, I began to question myself as a writer. I thought, “In what context will I, Richard O’Dwyer of Boston, Massachusetts, ever be able to ‘make a name for myself?’”

An hour later, I stumbled through the door of my one-room apartment and prepared to sprawl on my couch and splurge on the microwavable meals in my freezer. However, my plans were quickly interrupted by the ring of my rotary phone. I held my ear to the receiver and grinned when it was met by the thick Boston accent of my longtime friend, Jack O’Callahan.

“Richard!” he exclaimed. “Richard you are not going to believe this! I made the team! They announced the roster today and it has my name on it! The coach is this total hard ass and I didn’t think he even liked me but I made the cut!” My mind still cluttered with thoughts from the stressful day, I didn’t exactly process what he was telling me.

“Hey Jack!” I replied. “So… you made the team?”

“Yeah man, tryouts for the Olympic hockey squad were this week! I guess they saw somethin’ in me that I never knew I had.”

“Of course, how could I forget? That’s incredible Jack! Congratulations!”

“Thanks man,” he responded. “The next 5 months are going to be crazy. Right now the team has a roster of 26 and coach has to get it down to 20, so I haven’t really made it yet. We have a training camp in August in Lake Placid and then we head off to Europe for three weeks in September. According to coach, we have a 61-game pre-Olympic schedule! Plus, he already assigned us this 300-question psychological test… he’s really intense.”

“Sounds exciting though… and I bet you’re playing with a lot of talented guys. I’ll have to come watch you guys play sometime!”

Jack chuckled into the receiver. “Yeah we’ll see how it goes; we’re just a bunch of college kids. Also, the roster is a mix of guys from Minnesota and Massachusetts, so hard feelings are likely to resurface. Anyways, it’s been great talking to you Richard but I gotta go meet up with the guys so we can figure out this crazy test coach just threw at us.”

“It was great talking to you too. I’m really thrilled for you Jack… I hope I can come watch one of your exhibition games. Let me know if you’re playing any teams from around here. Good luck with your teammates and coach! Give me a call soon.”

“Will do man, I’ll talk to you later.”

As I hung up the phone, I couldn’t help the warm tingling sensation that overcame my body. I basked in the joy I felt for my best friend, who had been skating with a stick in his hand since I could remember. Because of Jack and others who were a part of Boston’s lively hockey culture, I had grown rather close to the game of hockey as well. Although I was far too awkward and dangly to pursue the sport myself, I had spent many hours of my childhood in various hockey arenas, watching my friends, college players, and professionals. If you looked at me back then in my large glasses that tended to slip down my nose with my cluttered, brown messenger bag in hand, you never would have guessed that I knew a stitch about hockey. However, growing up in one of America’s hotbeds only predisposed me to becoming a major enthusiast for the sport. I loved the rhythm and grace of the players as they glided across the ice in patterns so intricate and mesmerizing, I was astounded each time I observed a game. Therefore, I understood the magnitude of being so close to someone who was selected for the Olympic team.

I picked up that day’s newspaper and spread the crinkled pages across my kitchen table. “Dwindling Oil Supply Plagues Gas Stations Throughout America .” “Cold War Arms Race Continues.” “Inflation Rates Climb to 18%.” And most menacing of them all, “Recent Events Call to Question the Strength of the American Spirit.” Suddenly, it dawned upon me that my boss, no matter how red-faced and frightening, was right. There were not enough outstanding journalists who could change the face of the news with a single story. It was all the same drab and depressing updates on events that nearly everyone knew were creating turmoil throughout the nation and around the world that summer. I thought, “What kind hard-working person with a decent, time-consuming job wants to pick up the newspaper after a long day at work and be further depressed by the lack of progress in our country? Yes, we have to tell the stories, whether they’re good or bad. But even so, writing is supposed to inspire, not deflate.”

My blue eyes lit up and I shoved aside the newspaper. I realized that a young and inexperienced group of college kids chasing a dream was exactly what my career, what the news, and what America needed. Obviously, there was no promising that this squad of men in their early 20s would defy expectations and defeat what were effectively “professional” Olympic teams who had been playing together for years on end. However, in these boys rested a glimmer of hope. In a time when the American spirit was truly “suffering”, these boys had the potential to give Americans a reason to be proud. They were capable of enabling our nation to feel that it was finally able to accomplish something meaningful. They represented the common man, the underdog that was so often crushed by the “system.” Despite all odds, they were fresh, young, new, and had the potential to reverse this cycle in which we all get trapped. I realized that they could be my way out too. Sure, it was risky to bet on youth, inexperience, and clashing cultures, but where would any of us be if we avoided risk and were satisfied with mediocrity? No, I was done being the stereotypical journalist in his geeky glasses and checkered flannel who was scared to step outside the boundaries of his workplace. I was going to write a story about the 1980 Olympic hockey team, and no one was going to stop me.

Without warning, my mind flashed back to the chilling memories of my childhood, my experiences as “the runt of the litter.” “Richard, all your teachers loved your sister! Just try to be more like her honey,” my mother’s nagging tone rang in my ear. “If you put in the work, you could become the great athlete that your brother was in high school,” I heard my father’s booming voice shake the dinner table. My older brother and sister had both graduated from the household having exceeded my parents’ expectations, so my mother and father *never* missed an opportunity to mention their noteworthy accomplishments. A writer at heart, my yearning for literature and constant scribbling in my journal never fascinated my achievement-driven parents, so they resorted to comparing me to my scholarly sister and athletic brother. To them, I was always “lost”, and their degrading discourse that seeped through the walls each night as I fell asleep nearly sucked all the passion out of me. I shook my head and returned to the present, as if clearing all the cluttered, discouraging memories of the past and making room for the now. The chip on my shoulder empowered me to defy the forgotten category in which I had been so carelessly placed.

I bustled into work the next morning with a coffee stain on my sweater and tousled hair, but my energy was infectious. I had been up until 2 a.m. the previous night gathering all the information I could about Herb Brooks, the coach of the Olympic team, as well as all of the players who were on the roster at that point. Stumbling into my boss’ office, I handed him a warm coffee and began babbling uncontrollably. “Mr. Horton… Mr. Horton…” I panted, having sprinted from my apartment down the street. “Mr. Horton, I have an incredible idea. So my friend-” Mr. Horton cut me off with one of his disapproving grunts, and I frowned at his old, wrinkled face.

“This better be good,” he sighed and wheeled around to face his computer.

“Well sir,” I mumbled, quickly losing my confidence. “If I could just have a moment of your time you could really see how brilliant this is. So my friend, Jack O’Callahan, called me last night to tell me that he made the Olympic hockey team-”

Mr. Horton’s phone rang abruptly and as he reached to answer it he said, “Sorry Richard, I just don’t have the time for this right now. Get back to work and maybe we can talk later.”

I stormed out of his office angrily, for I had once again been shut down by the formidable manager of *The Boston Herald*, THE George Horton. However, in that moment, he was not George Horton, he was just an old bag too reluctant to explore uncharted waters and listen to a young writer who actually knew what he was talking about. My ideas were too plentiful, my passion too extraordinary. I decided that I would continue to work for old Mr. Horton, no matter how wrinkly and stubborn he might be, but that in no way was I going to let him degrade or extinguish the exceptional story I believed I was on the verge of writing. I concealed myself in my cubicle for the rest of the day as I continued my research and recorded the dates and locations of all the Olympic team’s exhibition games that I could possibly attend. After discovering that most of their games were at the Met Center in Bloomington, Minnesota, I booked myself a flight to attend their first home game in September and planned to make the day-long drive in order to attend two of their back-to-back home games again in October.

It was dark when I left the office that night. The light of my cubicle was the last to illuminate the building. I stuffed all of my notes into my ragged messenger bag and strolled home with a skip in my step, a hunger for more information about the 1980 Olympic hockey team.

Until September when I planned to attend the team’s first game, I received weekly calls from Jack, updating me on the team’s progress in training and in their exhibition games in Europe. They played the Holland National Team, a number of Finland teams, and the Norway National Team before returning to the U.S. They totaled up six wins, two losses, and one tie over the course of the trip, and according to Jack, they still had plenty of room to grow. I scribbled down notes furiously each time he called, ensuring that I would not miss a single scrap of information about their journey. Some of the most interesting updates I received revolved around the heated dynamics of the newly meshed team. At one of their first practices, Jack instigated a fight with Rob McClanahan, a Minnesota native who Jack had competed against in college. McClanahan was still infuriated about one of the games that he had lost to Jack, for there was apparently a debatable call at the end of the game. After taking a hard hit from Jack in practice, Rob lashed out and the two engaged in a brawl on the ice while Brooks stood aside and let them unleash their pent-up frustration. Jack said that although Brooks did nothing to stop the fight, he was certainly not happy about the lack of unity that continued to plague the team.

In contrast to the fight, an event had occurred to bring this egocentric, inexperienced group of young men together. It was September 21, 1979, when I received one of my weekly calls from Jack. However, this call proved to be far more promising for my story than all the others. After our typical greeting, Jack dove into his most thrilling update yet.

“On September 17th we had a match against the Norwegian National Team,” he began. “Herb expected a fairly easy win, but the team was having a totally off-day. The bench was completely unfocused, making comments about the girls in the stands… pretty much about anything that didn’t have to do with the game. The lack of focus reflected in our play as well. We tied the team 3-3 and we should have crushed them… Herb was infuriated. The final horn sounded and Herb had a crazy look in his eye. We all prepared to trudge back into the locker room and hang our heads, but instead, we were ordered to skate to the endline. Herb introduced us to a running drill that he like to call ‘Herbies’, which is essentially a suicide on the ice. ‘If you’re not willing to put in the work during the game, we’ll put the work in now,’ he spat at us before blowing his whistle. Of course, none of us were happy about our performance, but little did we know how severely we were going to be punished. Fans slowly filed out of the arena as the deafening sound of Herb’s whistle echoed off the walls. A couple minutes later, the lights turned off. We were all dead tired. I could barely stand and my lungs burned as I gasped for oxygen, but Herb was nowhere near stopping. Eventually, the team doctor scrambled onto the ice and insisted that Herb ‘stop the madness.’ But Herb knew just how hard to push us. Finally, when we were all lying on the ice in exhaustion and praying vigorously that his lips would not enclose around the whistle, Mike Eruzione found the strength to rise above us all. Throughout our training thus far, we had all introduced ourselves at various times by saying our name, our hometown, and “what team we play for.” Everyone on the team had responded with their college alma mater, but not this time. Mike managed to squeak the words out between his heavy breaths. ‘Mike Eruzione… Boston Massachusetts…’

‘Who do you play for?’ Herb inquired firmly.

‘And I play for... The United States of America.’

‘That’s all for tonight boys,’ Herb responded immediately, proceeding to exit the arena. We all sighed in immense relief and laid our weakened bodies on the cool ice. As tired as we were, that was the most prepared we had ever been for the upcoming games. We all realized that our own hockey careers, our college alma maters and our individual accolades were no longer relevant. We realized that we were representing our country, and that if our own egos were going to get in the way of that, we didn’t belong on the team.”

After Jack enlightened me with this inspiring story of the team’s progress under Herb, I was feeling more confident than ever. I believed that they were finally beginning to shape into a meaningful group of men, and my hunch that Herb was a potent leader was confirmed. A few days later, I flew to Minnesota and attended their match against the Minnesota North Stars. I was dismayed when they suffered a 4-2 loss, but I was able to interview several of the players and get a sense for their preparations and goals as the Olympics were fast approaching. Of course it would have been great to interview Herb himself, but because he was extremely busy with ingraining a smooth, European style of play into the boys, I decided not to bother him with any questions. Most of the boys felt that the team was improving dramatically; however, they were anxious to play against more experienced European competition.

In late October, I embarked on the day-long drive to Minnesota to watch the team compete against the University of Minnesota Duluth and the University of Minnesota. It was incredible to witness their vast improvement propel them towards two noteworthy victories. Herb seemed fairly pleased with their play and continued to enforce ‘the weave’, his offensive plan for the team. Jack said that his philosophy was: “if you’re going to compete against European teams, you’d better learn how to play like them.” I noticed that the team seemed to have bonded well over the past month and that players who had previously despised one another were patting each other on the back after every goal. The building energy in the arena made me believe that if the U.S. hockey team was able to pull of a tremendous win in the Olympics, their celebration would go down in history as one of the best.

The frosty winter months flew by as I buried my nose in my notes from all of Jack’s calls, my interviews with the players, and the games I had attended. I tried to keep up on my routine work, for any suspicions that I might be diverging from Mr. Horton’s plan meant severe punishment. Even so, I found time to draft out a lead-in to the Olympic games, overviewing the progress of the team as I continued to receive calls from Jack. He noted that the team was gelling and that the holiday season had brought them together to give thanks for their unique opportunity. Jack was also sure to mention that Herb distanced himself from the players even as their strong chemistry magnified, for he believed that the ‘fear factor’ was crucial. It became clear to the team that Herb was always available as a coach in the months leading up to the Olympics, but friendliness was not in his repertoire. Jack hypothesized that he isolated himself because he felt that the team needed to unite against him in order to reach their potential.

February 9, 1980 arrived faster than the bitter winds whistled through the Boston air that winter. This was the date of the team’s final exhibition match, and they were playing none other than the absolute strongest force in international hockey: the Soviet Union. I cleared my work schedule so that I could drive up to Madison Square Garden for the game. Many people were appalled by Herb’s decision to schedule this game a mere four days before the Opening Ceremony, but Herb was never one to conform to the standards of the “hockey gurus” throughout the world. He and the U.S. team marched onto the ice on February 9th, perceived by the public as far inferior to the daunting Soviet team, but prepared as ever to try and compete.

Even so, the second the horn sounded, the Soviets lived up to their prestigious title by dominating play and reaffirming the public’s assumption that the U.S. team was far too young and inexperienced to contend with a team that had been together for nearly a decade. Herb’s frustration was visible as he watched his players get pummeled by the Soviet’s graceful style of play. The score quickly reflected the noticeable gap between the two teams, and the board lit up with a 10-3 Soviet advantage when the final horn sounded. To the public, the U.S. team was a group of college boys who were unprepared to compete at the international level. While Herb had succeeded in raising them to a higher standard than many people anticipated, no one believed they had a shot at a medal. I will admit that this crushing loss to the Soviets was highly concerning for my story, but a tiny inkling in my gut told me to maintain faith.

A layer of snow encased Lake Placid, NY like white icing spread smoothly across a cake. There I was, huddled in my parka near a pond iced over by a glassy sheet, fascinated by the sight of naive children skating across the frozen pool without a care in the world. Meanwhile, I was in a state of distress, for the freezing weather was not the only reason that my body was shivering. This was undoubtedly the most decisive day of my writing career, and I fidgeted in my snow gear as I pondered my fate. My knuckles turned white as I clutched my notebook tightly, turning it over and over in my hands, sifting through all of the note-covered pages in my mind. “If they could just keep this momentum going,” I whispered to myself and watched the steam of my breath melt into the frigid air.

It was February 22, 1980, the day that the United States hockey team was set to play the Soviet Union in the semifinals of the Olympics. They had barreled through pre-medal round competition, finishing with four wins and a tie. Under Brooks’ high-pressure, high-pace style of play, the team defeated Czechoslovakia, Norway, Romania, West Germany, and tied the talented team from Sweden. Many hockey fans were surprised to see the U.S. team prevail against such strong competition, but it was that chilly afternoon of February 22nd that the players would be put to the most telling test of their hockey careers. They had a sense for the immense effort and overall flawless game that it would take to have a shot at outlasting the Soviets due to their scrimmage a couple weeks prior, but they were up against a whole new beast with a potential medal and a “win or go home” consequence looming over their heads. Tickets were trading at four or five times their original $67.20 printed price. The hype was more pronounced than for any other Olympic event held in the United States before, and American fans channeled their bitter feelings about the Cold War into the passion and spirit that underdogs need. I was determined to have confidence in my original notion that investing in this team could turn my career around. Heading into the bustling arena with my ambitions sparkling in my blue eyes, I blocked out all the assumptions of the public and focused on the blank page in front of me, the masterpiece that I anticipated was about to be inscribed on the empty canvas.

Jim Craig, goaltender of the United States team, emerged from the locker room with the rest of the team stampeding behind him, a blur of red, white and blue. Reporters avidly flashed their cameras as the clinking of the players’ skates echoed throughout the tunnel and the low murmur of the crowd heightened to a roaring applause. Craig slowed to a stop at the opening of the tunnel and peered wondrously at the sea of fans surrounding the ice. The arena practically shook with cheers of approval and excitement for the United States team. For the first time, it appeared that Craig and the rest of the team were in their element, like they knew that the Lake Placid Arena was where they belonged on the afternoon of February 22nd. They charged onto the ice with the thunderous roars of their fans pushing them forward, giving them the momentum to face the dominating force of international hockey. I sat on the edge of my seat, barely suppressing the enormous grin that twitched at the corners of my mouth as the arena swelled with nationalism. It dawned upon me that the Soviets were not only battling the U.S. team itself, but an entire army of die-hard fans. They were up against the United States of America.

Midway through the first period, the tension in the crowd was visible as American fans anxiously braced themselves for the 1-0 Soviet lead to become a landslide. However, with Craig anchoring the team in save after incredible save and the U.S. players scrambling to contain the Soviet offense, the team somehow managed to hang on. Suddenly, the puck broke loose and the lull in the arena’s energy spiked as fans spotted the opportunity. Buzz Schneider slipped in behind the opponent’s defense and prepared the puck in front of him with just enough space to take a shot at the world renowned Soviet goaltender. In a matter of seconds, the puck rocketed past Tretiak and into the back of the net, spurring an eruption from the crowd. “USA… USA… USA” the crowd chanted as red, white and blue uniforms danced across the ice. I shoved my writing supplies aside and jumped to my feet, overcome with the sensation that my dreams were, against all odds, becoming a reality. This was no longer about my writing career. The story unfolding before me was one of real heroes and it was telling itself, authentically, the best way a story can.

The final seconds on the clock ticked down as the first period drew to a close. We were down 2-1 and doing our best to contain the small deficit until halftime, when another opportunity presented itself. Mark Johnson, arguably the most skilled player on the U.S. team, glided across the ice and received the puck with space in the offensive end. Three seconds remained. Aware of the minimal time, he maintained his composure, thus maximizing the few seconds he had left. Only the Soviet goaltender stood between Johnson and a goal that would even the score between the U.S. and their menacing opposition. His stick smacked the ice as he guided the puck around Tretiak for yet another goal to shock hockey fans around the world. The team huddled together to celebrate amidst the whoops and hollers that brought the arena to life. Resonating roars of “USA” chased them into the locker room at the period’s end.

3-3 illuminated the scoreboard with 11 minutes to go in the final period. The energy in the arena elevated to a fever pitch as fans celebrated another memorable goal by Johnson. Just a minute later, Mike Eruzione, captain of the team, broke loose in the midst of the action. Eruzione was someone I had watched closely throughout the team’s journey, for hockey specialists doubted his ability to compete on such a high-level team. Herb felt that he was essential to their success due to his extraordinary leadership capabilities, but many questioned his raw hockey skills. After all the smack talk and backstabbing comments by the media, there he was, parting the sea of red with 10 minutes to go in the semifinal game. It was a mid-range shot, and he did not think twice before swinging his stick back. The puck sailed through the air. Silence swept across the arena like a restless sleep; the kind where your eyes are closed, but your mind is racing and your heart is pounding. No one moved. No one breathed. No one spoke. For a split second, the small black disk was the sole fixation of every set of eyes in that arena. The dark, valiant knight that was the puck flashed by the Soviet goaltender and charged into the back of the net as it slayed the savage dragon and won the battle.

Eruzione leapt into the air and danced into the arms of his beloved teammates as they dogpiled on the ice. It is extremely difficult to describe the feeling in an Olympic arena in the United States during a time of political and social turmoil, when an American hockey team is leading with ten minutes to go in a match against their all-consuming enemy both on and off the ice. The moment was magical, for my American flesh and bones were tingling with excitement as I too, felt like I belonged.

My canvas had also been painted, painted with obstacles, doubts, bumps in the road; but as a writer, I of all people should know that a story is not a story without a conflict. See, until that moment when Mike Eruzione’s shot whizzed into the back of the Soviet goal, I never believed that I was capable of becoming the writer that my professors and even my boss were pushing me to become. When I looked in the mirror, I still saw the geeky, acne-covered kid with oversized glasses who hid out in his English class for most of high school. No one knew who I was then, so I figured it was best to keep it that way. But the second that puck smacked the back of the net and I witnessed the United States hockey team pile up on the ice in sheer joy, I reconsidered. I asked, where would this team be, where would our country be, where would any of us be if we didn’t have faith? Faith that we are all set on our separate paths of life for a reason. Faith that all these paths lead to a common goal, a goal of self-fulfillment and maximizing potential to the best of one’s ability. Faith that even the lowest valleys with the thickest mud and rivers so wide and so deep that you can’t see across them are not impossible to overcome. Faith that we’re all underdogs, all inferior to the system that we are thrown into everyday, and that greatness is achieved when we find the strength to rise above normality. Faith that each and every one of our canvases has endless possibilities, for each step we take, each color we choose, molds who we become, our very own masterpiece. We all start with blank paper, sharpened pencils, and an inspiration that guides our thoughts across the page. We are all writers. What will your story be?

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* “Cold war arms race continues”

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* Tickets were trading at four or five times their original $67.20 printed price
* The hype was greater than for any Olympic event held in the U.S. before
* They had a training camp in August of 1979 in Lake Placid
* The team began with a roster of 26 players
* The team went to Europe for three weeks in September
* The team had a 61-game pre-Olympic schedule
* “Inflation rates climb to 18%”
* “Recent events call to question the strength of the American spirit”
* The Soviet team had been together for nearly a decade
* The team was made up of “inexperienced college kids”
* Buzz Schneider scored the first goal for the U.S. team
* The U.S. team was down 2-1 with just seconds left in the half when Mark Johnson evened the score
* The coach assigned his players a 300-question psychological test
* The team had 5 months to prepare before the Olympics
* Jack O’Callahan and Rob McClanahan got in a fight at one of their first practices
* The Olympics were held in Lake Placid, NY

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* Oil crisis had caused the demand for gasoline to far exceed the supply

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* In the pre-medal round, the U.S. defeated Czechoslovakia, Norway, Romania, West Germany, and tied Sweden

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* The coach of the team was Herb Brooks
* Herb purposefully distanced himself from his players
* Herb made his team stay on the ice and run “Herbies” after the game against the Norwegian National Team

"The 1980 Miracle on Ice: The Game." *SBNation.com*. Vox Media, 11 Feb. 2014. Web. 17 Feb. 2015.

* In the semifinal game, the Soviets went up first with a 1-0 lead
* Johnson scored the third goal of the semifinal game as well
* The score was 3-3 with 11 minutes to go in the game
* Mike Eruzione scored with 10 minutes left in the game

"1980 Pre Olympic Tour." *Vintage Minnesota Hockey*. Sport Ngin, 2015. Web. 29 Mar. 2015.

* Most of the team’s exhibition matches were at the Met Center in Bloomington, MN
* In Europe, the team played the Holland National Team, a number of Finland teams, and the Norway National Team
* They finished their Europe trip with six wins, two losses, and one tie
* On September 17th, the team had a match against the Norwegian National Team and they tied 3-3
* The team lost 4-2 to the Minnesota North Stars in an exhibition game
* The team beat University of Minnesota Duluth and University of Minnesota in late October
* The team lost 10-3 to the Soviet Union in their last exhibition match on February 9, 1980

"1980 U.S. Olympic Team." *U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame*. 2013 USA Hockey, n.d. Web. 05 Feb. 2015.

* Herb called his offense “the weave”, which was a European style of play
* Herb had to cut his roster of 26 players to 20
* “If you’re going to compete against European teams, you’d better learn how to play like them”

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* Craig came up with save after incredible save in the semifinal game
* Tretiak was the Soviet goaltender

"Temperature - Precipitation - Sunshine - Snowfall." *Climate Lake Placid*. 2015 US Climate Data, n.d. Web. 17 Feb. 2015.

* It was snowing on the day of the semifinal game against the Soviet Union